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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

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FOR: "WINDOW TREATMENT PANELS"

WINDOW TREATMENT PANELS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/739,602, filed December 18, 2003, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/032,336, filed December 21, 2001. The entire disclosure of each of these prior applications is incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Windows such as those found in residential settings are typically provided with window treatments. The term "window treatment," as used herein, includes, but is not limited to curtains, drapes, fabric panels, blinds and valences. Any type of drapery fabric, curtain fabric, wood, metal, jute, bamboo or other natural or man-made material may be used to make the window treatment of the invention.

The primary function of a window treatment is to restrict the amount of light and visual access through windows. However, the aesthetic effect of a window treatment is considered by most purchasers as being the primary basis for selection of one of a plurality of competing styles. Once a particular style is chosen, it is usually not possible to vary the visual effect that a particular style provides when the window treatment is placed in front of a window. Examples of several prior art window treatments are found in U. S. 2,668,587; U. S. 2,611,428; U.S. 6,142,210 and U.S. 3,952,988.

Generally, window treatments are cut to provide various visual effects in that when the window treatment is placed in position in front of a window, the window is 'framed' by the profile of the window treatment. The visual effect of a particular window treatment may only be modified by using cloth tie backs or means which allow for the horizontally movement of the window treatment such as movable suspending means or traverse rods.

The applicants have devised a window treatment system which has a plurality of fastening means that are arranged to allow for the partial or complete raising of the window treatment. This structure allows the user to select a number of positions which vary the exposure of the window to admit varying amounts of light or visual access to the window opening without having to remove the window treatment from its fixed position in front of a window.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides a window treatment sized to fit substantially over a window opening. The window treatment comprising one or more first fastening means affixed to the window treatment in order to allow a lower portion of the window treatment to be raised vertically and affixed to a surface of the window treatment. This enables at least a portion of the window opening to be exposed. Generally, there will be one row of a second fastening means capable of being affixed to the first fastening means. In one alternative embodiment, the window treatment may comprise from 1 to 7, preferably 3 to 5 rows of a second fastening means. The first fastening means and second fastening means are intended to hold a lower portion of the window treatment to an upper portion of the window treatment.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of this invention to provide a window treatment that can be arranged in different configurations when it is hung in front of a window.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a window treatment that can be arranged in many configurations to provide different visual impressions.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a window treatment which may be easily opened and closed to act as a privacy closure for a window as well as a decorative window treatment.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a window treatment that provides at least two distinct visual impressions by means of ties and openings in the panel (e.g., grommets) that may be used to vary the area of the window opening that is exposed on the inside of the window.

These and other objects of the invention will become apparent from a review of the specification and accompanying drawings. The drawings represent non-limiting embodiments of the present invention. The drawings are merely illustrative, and are not exhaustive of the various configurations the present invention may take.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a front plan view of a fabric panel having tab tops, a horizontal row of button means and the horizontal rows of loop means.

Figure 2 is a front view of the fabric panel of Fig. 1 where the three rows of loops have been fastened seriatim onto the button means.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of Fig. 2 which shows the folded edges of the fabric panel when the rows of loops are attached to the button means.

Figure 4 is a plan view of a panel having tab tops, a horizontal row of ties and rows of grommets.

Figure 5 is a plan view of the panel of FIG. 4 where the ties have been fastened Seriatim onto the grommets.

Figure 6 shows a perspective view of FIG. 5 showing the folded edges of the panel when the rows of ties are fastened to the grommets

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Fig. 1 discloses an embodiment of a fabric panel **2** having tab tops **3, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d** and **3e** having interacting means which comprise button row **4** and loop rows **6, 6a** and **6b**. The buttons **5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d** and **5e** are spaced at substantially equal intervals in a horizontal direction across the fabric panel **2**.

The loop rows **6, 6a** and **6b** are spaced at gradually increasing intervals from the bottom of the fabric panel to the top of the fabric panel in order to provide substantially equal amounts of exposed fabric **10, 12** on the hidden panels **14, 16** which are under folded sections **18** and **20** when the rows of loops **6, 6a** and **6b** are all fastened to the button means **5, 5a, 5c, 5d** and **5e**. Front sections **18, 20** and **22** result from the folding of the fabric panel to allow for fastening of the loops onto the button means.

As best seen in **Fig.2**, when all of the loops in rows **6, 6a** and **6b** are fastened sequentially with the highest row being fastened first and the lowest row being fastened last to the button means the fabric panel presents a series of folded edges **10, 12** which provide an aesthetically pleasing front and side profiles to the viewer. At the same time, the buttons and loops function to provide a secure means of holding the fabric panel in one or more open positions that may be used for control of the amount of light that is allowed to pass through the window.

If desired, the fabrics may be printed in such a manner that a preselected design may be formed when the window treatment is placed in the 'button up' position.

The embodiment of **Fig. 1** is shown with a tab top suspending means but any other type of ring or rod type suspending sleeve may be used to provide a means for suspending the window treatments of the invention.

In one alternative embodiment, the present invention comprises a first fastening means and a second fastening means. That is, the first fastening means is adapted to be removably secured to the second fastening means, or vice versa. The fastening means may include, but is not limited to any type of a protrusion such as a post, button, knob, curved hook, Velcro etc. that is capable of holding a loop or fabric loop or rope type loop, or a loop of roping or thread, for example. The fastening means may also comprise, a metal ring, snaps, buttons and button holes or Velcro type fastening system.

The first fastening means and the second fastening means are sized to allow for quick engagement and disengagement of each other in order to facilitate the operation of the window treatment. In one alternative embodiment, the first fastening means is a row of buttons, and the second fastening means is one or more rows of loops. Here, it is preferred to place the button means and loop means as shown in **Fig. 1**. It is possible to reverse the positions of the first fastening means and the second fastening means so that rows of first fastening means are available to be affixed to a single row of second fastening means located at the upper part of the window treatment.

In another alternative embodiment, rows of buttons and loops may be spaced as shown in **Fig. 3** or in any type of spacing to achieve any desired effect. The rows of buttons and loops are shown in a horizontal arrangement but it is within the scope of the invention to arrange the rows of buttons and loops in various angled or arced configurations to achieve any desired visual effect. Each row of buttons and loops may comprise from 3 to 10, preferably 4 to 8 buttons and loops, depending on the weight of the fabric, the width of the panel and the visual effect that is desired.

It is preferred to use one row of buttons arranged horizontally at a location which is within 0-12 inches, preferably within four inches of the top edge of the means which are used to suspend the panel in front of the window.

Figs. 4-6 disclose an embodiment of a panel **2** having tab tops **3, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d** and **3e** having interacting means which comprise tie rows **4** and openings (e.g., grommets) **6, 6a** and **6b**. The ties **5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d** and **5e** are spaced at substantially equal intervals in a horizontal direction across the fabric panel **2**.

The rows of openings (e.g., grommets) **6, 6a** and **6b** are spaced at gradually increasing intervals from the bottom of the fabric panel to the top of the fabric panel in order to provide

substantially equal amounts of exposed fabric **10**, **12** on the hidden panels **14**, **16** which are under folded sections **18** and **20** when the rows of openings **6**, **6a** and **6b** are all fastened to the ties **5**, **5a**, **5c**, **5d** and **5e**.

As best seen in **Figs. 5** and **6**, when all of the rows of openings **6**, **6a** and **6b** are fastened sequentially with the highest row being fastened first and the lowest row being fastened last to the ties the fabric panel presents a series of folded edges which provide an aesthetically pleasing front and side profiles to the viewer. At the same time, the openings and ties function to provide a secure means of holding the fabric panel in one or more open positions that may be used to control the amount of light allowed to pass through the window.

If desired, the fabrics may be printed in such a manner that a preselected design may be formed when the window treatment is placed in the 'tie up' position.

The embodiments of **Figs. 4-6** are shown with a tab top suspending means but any other type of ring or rod type suspending sleeve may be used to provide a means for suspending the window treatments of the invention.

As used herein the term "tie" or "ties" may include but is not limited to a cord, rope, strap, string, bow, swath of material, or any other similar means capable of securing a portion of the panel in a raised position. The tie may comprise any type of fabric and/or other natural or man-made material.

The objects to which the ties are secured may comprise any type of a protrusion such as a post, button, knob, curved hook, Velcro, a metal ring, snaps, buttons or any other suitable type of fastening system. The ties may also be secured to one or more openings in the panel. Such openings may include grommets. It is understood that the present invention is not limited to grommets. Any opening capable of receiving a tie therethrough is within the scope of the present invention. As used herein, the term "grommet" may include, but is not limited to, any reinforced opening, including, but not limited to, a reinforced eyelet. The grommet may be reinforced with metal, plastic, fabric or any other suitable material capable of maintaining the shape of the opening in the panel.

The ties and the grommets are sized to allow for quick engagement and disengagement of the ties in order to facilitate the operation of the window treatment. It is possible to reverse the positions of the rows of ties and the rows of grommets so that rows of ties are available to be affixed to a single row of grommets located at the upper part of the window treatment.

The rows of ties and grommets may be spaced as shown in **Fig. 4** or in any other suitable spacing to achieve any desired effect. The rows of ties and grommets are shown in a horizontal arrangement but it is within the scope of the invention to arrange the rows of ties and grommets in various angled or arced configurations to achieve any desired visual effect. Each row of ties and grommets may comprise from 3 to 10, preferably 4 to 8 ties and grommets, depending on the weight of the fabric, the width of the panel and the visual effect that is desired.

It is preferred to use one row of ties arranged horizontally at a location which is within 0-12 inches, preferably within four inches of the top edge of the means used to suspend the panel in front of the window.

Throughout the description, where the present invention is described as having, including, or comprising specific components, or where processes are described as having, including, or comprising specific process steps, it is contemplated that the present invention also consists essentially of, or consists of, the recited components or processing steps. Also, one or more steps or elements may be omitted from the claimed invention, or the invention described herein suitably may be practiced in the absence of any component or step which is or is not specifically disclosed herein, so long as the invention remains operable.

Further, the present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. The foregoing embodiments and figures are therefore to be considered illustrative rather than limiting the invention described herein.

The content of each patent and non-patent document referred to herein is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

The foregoing description of a preferred embodiment of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention precise form disclosed. Obvious modifications or variations are possible in light of the above teachings. All such obvious modifications and variations are intended to be within the scope of the appended claims.